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CHINA'S GROWING ISOLATION IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Two years ago Peking appeared to be successfully on its way toward building within the world Communist movement a bloc of supporters that could directly challenge Moscow. Now, although the Chinese retain a few backers, the preponderance of influence is so clearly in Moscow's favor that a significant threat to Soviet leadership no longer exists. Peking can count with assurance on support only from Albania, the Communist Party of New Zealand, and a handful of tiny splinter groups.

In the past 18 months the Chinese have suffered their most serious setbacks in the Far East. The ruling parties of North Korea and North Vietnam have edged away from Peking, and the Communist Party in Japan can no longer be counted on for support. The Communist Party in Indonesia--which had been supporting Peking--was shattered in the wake of the abortive coup last fall.

China's relations with Cuba, Peking's only diplomatic toehold in the Western Hemisphere, have also sunk to an all-time low, and Peking is no longer able to work through pro-Castro activists in Latin America. Even in countries such as Rumania where Peking has been encouraging independence of Moscow, the Chinese have recently encountered serious difficulties.

China's setbacks have been due largely to Peking's own rigid dogmatism and political ineptitude, but they also result in part from the shift in Soviet tactics since the fall of Khrushchev. Moscow's new leaders have gained ground by muting public polemics and backing away from efforts to persuade foreign Communist parties that Peking should be formally read out of the Communist movement. Moreover, cautious Soviet military support for Hanoi under Khrushchev's successors has helped to undercut Chinese charges that Moscow is unwilling to support armed revolutionary struggle and has gone soft on the question of US "imperialism."

The Arrogance of Certitude

The concept of a Sino-centric world, at least insofar as truth and right thinking are concerned, is as strong in Peking today as it was under the emperors centuries ago. Advancing age, the pressures generated by their struggle with the Soviets, and frustration at the reverses sustained by China at home and abroad over the past few years, have all combined to fix Mao and the other "true believers" around him in an arrogance of certitude that is pushing Peking into a position of virtual isolation in the world Communist movement.

The Chinese present themselves as the fount of all valid revolutionary experience and as the torchbearers of true Marxism-Leninism, fighting against the poisonous heresy of Soviet "revisionism." Mao's thought is hailed as "the highest and most creative manifestation of Marxism-Leninism" and as the guide for revolutionaries all over the world. Mao is the "mentor of the international proletarian revolution." Peking now even claims that Maoism is "universal truth, effectively applicable everywhere and proven in actual practice in the Chinese revolution."

Underlying this grandiose self-image is the Leninist proposition that "all who are not for us are against us," a proposition that was explicitly applied by Peking to its relations with the rest of the Communist movement for the first time in an editorial published on 11 November 1965 in both the People's Daily and Red Flag. The editorial exhorted all true Marxist-Leninists to draw a "clear line of demarcation both politically and organizationally" between themselves and the "revisionists."

Party Secretary Teng Hsiao-ping sharpened the issue even more at a rally in Shanghai on 6 May 1966 when he declared that there can be no "centrist" line, no "vacillation" between Marxist-Leninists and revisionists. These remarks appear to have been intended at the time, in part at least, as a lecture to the North Vietnamese.

Relations With North Vietnam

Chinese influence in Hanoi has eroded somewhat since the Soviets began to supply North Vietnam with modern weapons that the Chinese were unable to provide. Peking continues to command a strong position, however, and will probably continue to do so. China's geographic location alone impels the North Vietnamese to maintain close ties with the Chinese as long as the war continues. Anxious to receive as much military aid as possible from every available source, Hanoi has tried to pursue a middle-of-the-road course, dodging the more inflammatory issues in the Sino-Soviet dispute so as to avoid antagonizing either major supporter.

The Chinese began to lose ground in Hanoi after Brezhnev and Kosygin came to power in

1964. Under Khrushchev, the Soviets had sharply disagreed with the optimistic view of the Vietnamese situation held in Hanoi and Peking. The Soviets had warned that the course being followed might lead to a direct military confrontation with the US and a large-scale Asian war. By late 1964, however, Communist prospects in Vietnam appeared fairly promising and the new Soviet leaders felt that Moscow could improve its position within the world Communist movement by providing increased propaganda and material support to Hanoi's war effort.

Khrushchev's tactics had had the effect of forcing the North Vietnamese into Peking's arms, and the new Soviet leaders felt that with relatively little danger of a head-on confrontation with the US, they could renew Moscow's support and nudge Hanoi back into a more neutral position in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The North Vietnamese, who probably were never too happy about being forced to rely solely on Peking, appear to have been more than willing to have the opportunity of getting more freedom of maneuver and a better bargaining position.

Hanoi responded to the Soviet switch by discontinuing the virulent anti-Soviet propaganda that it had been putting out for months in imitation of Peking. The November 1964 issue of the party theoretical journal Hoc Tap was withdrawn from the newsstands until a bitter article attacking "revisionism" could be replaced by an innocuous substitute. By March 1965, US air strikes against North Vietnam had begun in earnest and the large-scale buildup of US combat forces was well under way in the South. The North Vietnamese leaders, though fully aware of the strains this would put on their relations with Peking, turned to Moscow for increased support. Party secretary General Le Duan, Defense Minister Giap, and Foreign Minister Trinh went to Moscow, and the communiqué issued at the end of their week-long consultations was hailed by Hanoi as expressing an identity of views.

Although the Chinese were greatly concerned at this growth of Soviet influence, there was little they could do. Unable to match the sophisticated Soviet military aid, they had to content themselves with disparaging Soviet assistance, claiming that Moscow was only seeking to gain influence with the ultimate intent of selling out Vietnamese interests to the US.

The Other Asian Communists

Elsewhere in Asia, Communist China has also been losing ground in its struggle with Moscow. North Korea has grown increasingly critical of Peking's policies, particularly those dealing with Vietnam. Pyongyang reportedly sent a letter in May 1966 to the Chosen Soren, an organization of Korean residents in Japan, accusing Peking of sabotaging bloc unity. The letter castigated the Chinese for openly disparaging Soviet aid to Vietnam and stated that the worth of such aid should be evaluated by

Hanoi, not by Peking. It also denounced Peking for calling Cuba a revisionist nation and charged China with attempting to "seize hegemony" in Latin America, which the Korean Communists insisted is Havana's rightful sphere of influence.

This May 1966 letter is the best indication thus far of the distance Pyongyang has moved toward the Soviet position since Khrushchev's ouster and Kosygin's February 1965 visit to North Korea. Soviet aid has also further cemented Pyongyang's rapprochement with Moscow. Jet fighters and defensive missile equipment that have appeared in North Korea are believed to have been provided under the terms of a military assistance agreement signed with the Soviets in May 1965. Two coastal-defense cruise-missile complexes, two new surface-to-air missile sites, and additional MIG-19 Farmer jet fighters have been identified in North Korea in recent months.

For all their private criticism of Peking, the North Koreans have thus far avoided direct public attacks on the Chinese. The growing coolness in the Peking-Pyongyang relationship, however, was pointed up early this summer at the ceremonies marking the fifth anniversary of the Chinese-Korean treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. In their formal message to the Chinese and in speeches at diplomatic receptions, the Koreans employed the stock phrase "the Chinese people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party headed by Mao Tse-tung." Peking, however, in its messages and speeches did not reciprocate with references to the Korean Workers Party (KWP) "headed by Kim Il-sung," as the Chinese had done on all previous anniversaries. Chinese statements on the 16th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean war also conspicuously avoided references to the KWP and Kim, and the two countries have not exchanged high-level party delegations in more than two years.

The Japanese party, once a reliable supporter of Peking, has also moved toward independence. This has been particularly evident since the Soviet party congress last March. Under heavy Chinese pressure, party Secretary General Miyamoto grudgingly agreed to join in China's boycott of the meeting. He returned to Japan, however, apparently determined to steer a course increasingly independent of Peking and closer to the Soviet party. Japanese Communists criticize certain Chinese policies, especially in relation to Vietnam. The party paper Akahata now carries a considerable amount of Soviet reporting and has cut back on New China News Agency releases. Even advertisements for Mao's works no longer appear in the Japanese party daily.

The position of the Japanese party is now close to that of the North Korean as both attempt to follow a middle path between Peking and Moscow. When Miyamoto visited Pyongyang last March it was clear the two parties were taking a coordinated stand with respect to the problems within the international Communist movement. The joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of Miyamoto's visit to Pyongyang stressed the importance of Communist unity and cautioned against dogmatism and factionalism--both points certain to gall the Chinese. The communiqué also contained a warning against efforts to force "a unilateral will" on a fraternal party.

Further evidence of the Japanese Communists' drift away from Peking appeared in the 11 May issue of Akahata, which contained an article charging that "flunkyism and dogmatism" among some Japanese Communists had led to "unconditionally revering the leadership of foreign parties." The article also warned that overemphasis on the "antirevisionist struggle" reduced the effectiveness of the "struggle against US imperialism."

The disaster that befell the Indonesian Communist Party last fall has apparently been an important factor in the decision by the Korean and Japanese parties to shear away from the Chinese. Both feel that overdependence on Peking and blind acceptance of Chinese guidance compounded the difficulties of the Indonesian party and actually led to the party's losses in the aftermath of the coup.

Of all China's recent reverses abroad, the one in Indonesia has been the most serious. The Communist Party of Indonesia, which formerly exercised great influence in Djakarta and was closely aligned with Peking, has been outlawed. Party chairman Aidit and his top lieutenants have been killed and the party organization has been shattered. Less than a year ago the Indonesian party was the strongest nonbloc party consistently backing Peking. It now seems likely that the party's effectiveness as a political force--and its usefulness to the Chinese--will be virtually nil for years to come.

Peking and Latin America

China's relations with Cuba have been steadily deteriorating. Serious slippage first became evident in November 1964 when the Cubans hosted a meeting of Latin American Communists. That meeting was largely arranged by Moscow and represented a major Soviet bid to isolate the more radical pro-Chinese splinter factions in the Western Hemisphere.

Differences came to a head in early January 1966. Peking drastically cut shipments of rice to Cuba in retaliation for the increasingly explicit support Havana had been giving Moscow on various issues in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Castro replied at once with a speech accusing Peking of "joining in the US blockade of Cuba" and of attempting to "subvert the Cuban armed forces." There was some substance for the latter charge, since Chinese diplomats had long been distributing Mao's writings to military and student groups in Cuba. These propaganda efforts had been a major source of antagonism. Early this year, Castro reportedly referred to the Chinese ambassador as a "prostitute, peddling his wares."

China's setback in Cuba may have far-reaching implications for its efforts elsewhere in this hemisphere. Militant Communist splinter groups in Latin America have long looked to both Havana and Peking for both financial and moral support. Now they are being forced to choose, and there are already signs of divided allegiance among the leaders of certain activist groups.

In Ecuador, for example, Rafael Echeverria Flores--a longtime proponent of armed revolutionary struggle and leading advocate of Peking's line--visited Havana early last year and returned loudly singing Castro's praises. Several of his more rigid pro-Peking lieutenants now reportedly believe that he has secretly sold out to the "revisionists."

Many of the cadre in the most active revolutionary groups in Latin America have been trained in Cuba. They are Fidelistas at heart, and their basic sympathies lie with Havana. While a few extremists may accept the Chinese charge that Cuba is now revisionist, the majority will continue to look to Havana.

Relations With Eastern Europe

Peking's insistence that willingness to cooperate in attacks on Moscow is the price of Chinese friendship has recently exposed Peking's relationship with Bucharest as the marriage of convenience it was from the outset.

During his visit to Rumania last June Chou En-lai clashed openly with Rumanian party boss Ceausescu, who was unwilling to let the Chinese use Bucharest as a podium for polemics against the USSR. Disagreement was so sharp that no communiqué was issued at the conclusion of Chou's visit and the flimsiness of Sino-Rumanian protestations of close ties was exposed to public view.

The Chinese have long sought to exploit the growing tendency toward polycentrism among Moscow's one-time satellites by encouraging Rumanian

pressure on the Soviets for greater independence. Peking has scored some success in this endeavor, but has failed to translate the desire for greater autonomy into positive support for Chinese views. Chou's visit to Rumania was probably designed in large part to demonstrate that Albania is not the only close friend China has in Eastern Europe. In this it was a total failure.

Albania is now Peking's only staunch supporter within the Communist camp. The frequent high-level visits between the two provide occasions for virulent denunciations of the Soviet Union by both. Chou En-lai has visited Tirana twice in the past 18 months, and Albanian Premier Shehu made a lengthy tour of China this past spring. Members of Shehu's delegation outdid their hosts in the bitterness of their attacks on the new Soviet leaders and in underlining the irreconcilibility of the Chinese and Soviet positions.

During his visit to China, Shehu stated flatly that Mao was the leader of "the Chinese people and the international movement," and he insisted that "the center of the international movement has shifted from the Soviet Union to China." Throughout their stay the Albanians hailed the creation of a Mao-led world movement of Marxist-Leninist parties, and stressed the allegedly rapid growth of pro-Peking splinter groups around the world.

Splinter Parties

In actual fact, however, the pro-Chinese parties and factions in non-Communist countries remain small and are increasingly ridden with dissensions. Although Teng Hsiao-ping recently claimed that the Marxist-Leninist ranks "have greatly expanded," neither he nor any other Chinese leader made as optimistic an appraisal of the Marxist-Leninist camp as did the Albanian visitors. Peking appears to be well aware of the difficulties it faces in dealing with pro-Chinese groups abroad, and the Chinese probably recognize that in many instances the allegiance of these groups to Mao is nominal.

Many of the pro-Peking factions broke away from the orthodox, pro-Soviet parties as a result of clashes between leaders struggling for power. There are splits in the rank and file of almost every nonbloc Communist party--splits between the cautious and the impetuous, between the old guard and their younger critics hungry for position and perquisites. These divisions have been widened by the Sino-Soviet competition for support.

However, the activist rebels often quote Mao as scripture only to support their own cases in party squabbles. Basically, they are dissenters, given to petty jealousies and unable to agree even among themselves. The same reasons that caused them to break with the orthodox leadership now cause them to wrangle and vie with each other for Peking's favor.

Moreover, although the Chinese repeatedly point to the splinter groups as evidence of world-wide Marxist-Leninist support, the actual

influence of these factions is insignificant in most countries. Grippa's group in Belgium, numerically the strongest of China's supporters in Western Europe, has less than 400 members. Furthermore, there is evidence of growing fragmentation among these often minuscule factions.

In Colombia, for example, there are sharp differences among the pro-Chinese elements. The Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist) is plagued by petty jealousies, and the Worker Student Peasant Movement (MOEC) is divided into two distinct groups with little prospect they will settle their differences. For the time being Peking is hedging its bets and giving all three--the party and the two MOEC factions--modest financial support.

Pro-Chinese elements among the Spanish Communists are also feuding. Three small groups, made up largely of exiles, put out three separate publications and have resisted all efforts to bring about a reconciliation.

Front Groups

Among front groups, as well, Peking has been losing ground to Moscow. In 1962 the Chinese began to set up rival, anti-Soviet fronts but these efforts appear to have bogged down, and Peking must now content itself with a handful of pro-Chinese organizations that are patently puppets. Among these are the Afro-Asian Journalist Association, driven from Djakarta to Peking following last fall's abortive coup in Indonesia, and the Afro-Asian Jurists Association, a shaky operation with a one-man office in Conakry.

In 1963 the Chinese tried without success to set up rivals to such large and well-established organizations as the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the World Peace Council. A crucial turning point was their failure to persuade the powerful Japanese trade union, Sohyo, to bolt the WFTU. Since that time the Chinese have seldom attempted to make serious inroads among the Soviet-dominated groups.

Within the Afro-Asian world, however, the Chinese still try to set up regionally oriented fronts completely responsive to them. One such effort was the organization of a meeting in Peking in July 1966 of the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau. This provided Chinese propagandists with more than a week of hardhitting polemical copy, but the Soviets and the Egyptian Communists moved promptly to condemn the Chinese meeting as a rump session and convened a meeting in Cairo of the same bureau. Thus, the organization is now clearly split into two contending camps.

It appears probable that the Chinese will continue their efforts to steal away portions of such Afro-Asian bodies and set up their own rump groups. Such maneuvers, however, may in the long run weaken Chinese influence among the Afro-Asians. Nationalist leaders in the underdeveloped world are increasingly anxious to avoid involvement in the Sino-Soviet dispute and are loath to have their regional organizations drawn into the polemical battle.

Where they cannot persuade a sizable group to bolt, as in the case of the Writers' Bureau, the Chinese continue to attend the meetings of Soviet-dominated fronts and subject delegates to tiresome polemical speeches. Peking is sometimes able thus to exploit minor frictions between Moscow and its supporters. At times, however, the repetitious and abusive Chinese attacks on the Soviets have served only to antagonize the other participants. On a number of occasions, most of those in the audience have walked out during strident anti-Soviet harangues by Chinese representatives, thus underscoring China's growing isolation.

When controversial issues are voted on at such meetings, some of Peking's erstwhile supporters now refuse to go along with the Chinese delegation. At the World Peace Council meeting in Geneva this past June, for example, the Chinese were consistently supported only by the Albanians, although the Koreans, Vietnamese, and Japanese were present.

Prospects

There is every indication that Peking for some time to come will proceed along the uncompromising, isolationist course already charted, even at the cost of what it views as "temporary" losses. The fundamental reason for this is the conviction of the Chinese that they have fallen heir to the mantle of world revolutionary leadership. The present defiant, truculent line will probably be refined, elaborated on, and carried to ever greater extremes. Peking and its dwindling band of supporters will persist in what it terms its "principled stand."

By their own actions the Chinese have made it next to impossible for themselves to shift course abruptly without repudiating the doctrinal positions that lie at the roots of Peking's isolation. Changes in the world situation, however, could yet enable Peking to recoup some of its recent losses. Two years ago there appeared little likelihood that the Chinese would be as isolated as they are today, and a shift of leadership in Peking or Moscow could alter China's presently bleak prospects. [redacted] 25X1

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